Import of Polyurethane Rubber

*252. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any of the manufacturing companies in the country are allowed to import polyurethane rubber which is used for producing foam rubber in place of natural latex concentrates;

(b) whether it has come to the notice of Government that the use of polyurethane rubber in making foam rubbers is banned in western countries as the isocyanates in it is hazardous to human beings; and

(c) whether Government would take step: to ban the import of isocyanates and polyotcs for the use of polyurethane foam in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Under the current Export and Import Policy, Polyurethane is freely importable by all persons.

(b) According to information available with the Deptt, of Chemicals & Petro-chemicals, ban on the use of or production of Polyurethane foam anywhere in the world, has not come to notice.

(c) There is no proposal at present to ban the import of isocyanates and polyotcs for the use of polyurethane foam in the country. However, review of Export and Import Policy is a continuous process and changes in it are made from time to time as and when considered necessary in the public interest.

Welfare schemes for mentally retarded persons

*253. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any steps have taken and schemes drawn up to help mentally" retarded persons to stand on their feet, by placing them in occupation or vocations they are considered by specialists to be engaged in;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the mechanisms, if any created to monitor the operation of these schemes; and

(d) the number of such persons who have been engaged in such suited occupations during the past three years?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) and (b) The subject of Relief to the disabled and unemployable is the responsibility of the State Governments under Entry 9 in List II (State List). The Ministry of Welfare, Government of India plays a supporting and coordinating role.

The thrust of all the programmes/ schemes implemented by the Ministry of Welfare for handicapped welfare is to bring the disabled persons including mentally retarded persons in the mainstream of life. Major programmes/ schemes of the Ministry of Welfare for achieving the objective mentioned above, arc as follows:—

(1) *Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for the Disabled*

Under this scheme, assistance is provided to Voluntary Organisation to undertake various kinds of welfare activities for the disabled including mentally retarded. The activities may be aimed at prevention of disability, education and rehabilitation of disabled persons including mentally retarded. Financial support is given to the extent of 90% of the total project cost for recurring items like staff salary, maintenance charges, contigencies and non-recurring items like construction of building, equipments, furniture. Financial assistance is given for the projects such as vocational training centres, special